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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 004652

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [NATO](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#) [KU](#)  
SUBJECT: NATO ICI MEETING: KUWAIT SEEKS "STRATEGIC  
RELATIONSHIP"

REF: KUWAIT 4557

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C/NF) Summary. In a briefing for NATO resident ambassadors, NATO Secretary General Scheffer praised the atmosphere surrounding NATO-GOK meetings, and noted Kuwait's interest in expanding NATO's relationship with Kuwait and the GCC as a "political-military alliance." Scheffer believes Kuwait is seeking a "strategic partnership" with NATO that far exceeds what NATO is in a position to deliver. Kuwaiti officials said they continue to push for Saudi and Omani membership in the ICI. During the meeting, NATO signed an information sharing agreement with Kuwait, and continues to work on a transit agreement for NATO personnel and equipment. Kuwait expressed some reservations about NATO heavy equipment going to Iraq. The GOK leadership was pessimistic on Iraq, and expected that policy reviews underway in Washington would result in significant changes to the coalition approach. The GOK advocated dialogue with Iran and counseled that there was no military solution. (NOTE: USNATO Ambassador Nuland represented the United States at the formal sessions and USNATO will report separately. End note). End summary.

¶2. (U) NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer met December 12 with resident ambassadors from NATO member countries following the one day "NATO and Gulf Nations" conference in Kuwait (reftel). Scheffer noted the significance of holding the meeting in Kuwait, the first nation to join the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). He was impressed by the comprehensive effort by the GOK to expose the North Atlantic Council and NATO Secretariat to Kuwait.

NATO and GCC: Strategic Partners?  
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¶3. (C/NF) Scheffer remarked on the "good atmosphere" surrounding NATO's bilateral meeting with the Amir, Crown Prince and Foreign Minister of Kuwait. The Prime Minister said that NATO can make an important contribution to Gulf security and that it should do more as a "political military alliance" in the region. Scheffer understood this to mean the GOK felt it "useful to have NATO around." The GOK asserted it was ready to play a dynamic role in the ICI.

¶4. (C/NF) Scheffer said Kuwaiti expectations vis-a-vis NATO probably exceed what NATO can deliver, with Kuwait envisioning a strategic partnership and NATO looking to build a closer relationship incrementally through discrete projects and training activities. Scheffer said the GOK mindset was

such that they value political dialogue much more than practical cooperation.

¶5. (SBU) The GOK expressed hope that Saudi Arabia and Oman will join the ICI, rounding it out as a NATO-GCC relationship. NATO officials said they would raise the issue with both nations at a meeting in Riyadh in January 2007. Saudi Arabia and Oman were represented at the meeting by their local ambassadors.

¶6. (C/NF) NATO and the GOK signed an agreement on protection of NATO classified information that will allow additional information sharing, while the two sides continue to work on details of a transit agreement for NATO personnel and equipment. The Amir expressed reservations on the transit through Kuwait of "allied" equipment intended for transfer to the Government of Iraq citing concerns about in whose hands the equipment will end up.

#### Regional Issues

¶7. (C/NF) The Prime Minister and the Amir gave Scheffer a decidedly pessimistic view of prospects in Iraq. They forcefully stated Kuwait's interest maintaining an undivided Iraq. Scheffer noted that there was no indication of the GOK taking sides on Sunni-Shia issues. It was also clear that they expect substantial changes in the coalition approach as a result of the Iraq Study Group report and the USG policy review now underway.

¶8. (C/NF) On Iran, the GOK stressed the need for dialogue, offering to play some type of mediator role if asked. They stressed that there should be no military solution to the

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Iranian nuclear issue. The Foreign Minister said the Iranians would never use a nuclear bomb but that the risk of a nuclear accident and serious environmental harm was high.

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